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LETTERS TO A CLERGYMAN

BY

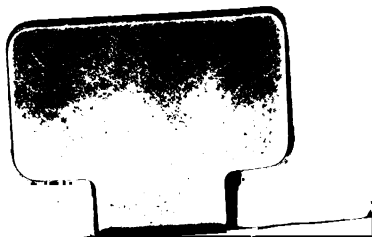
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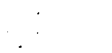
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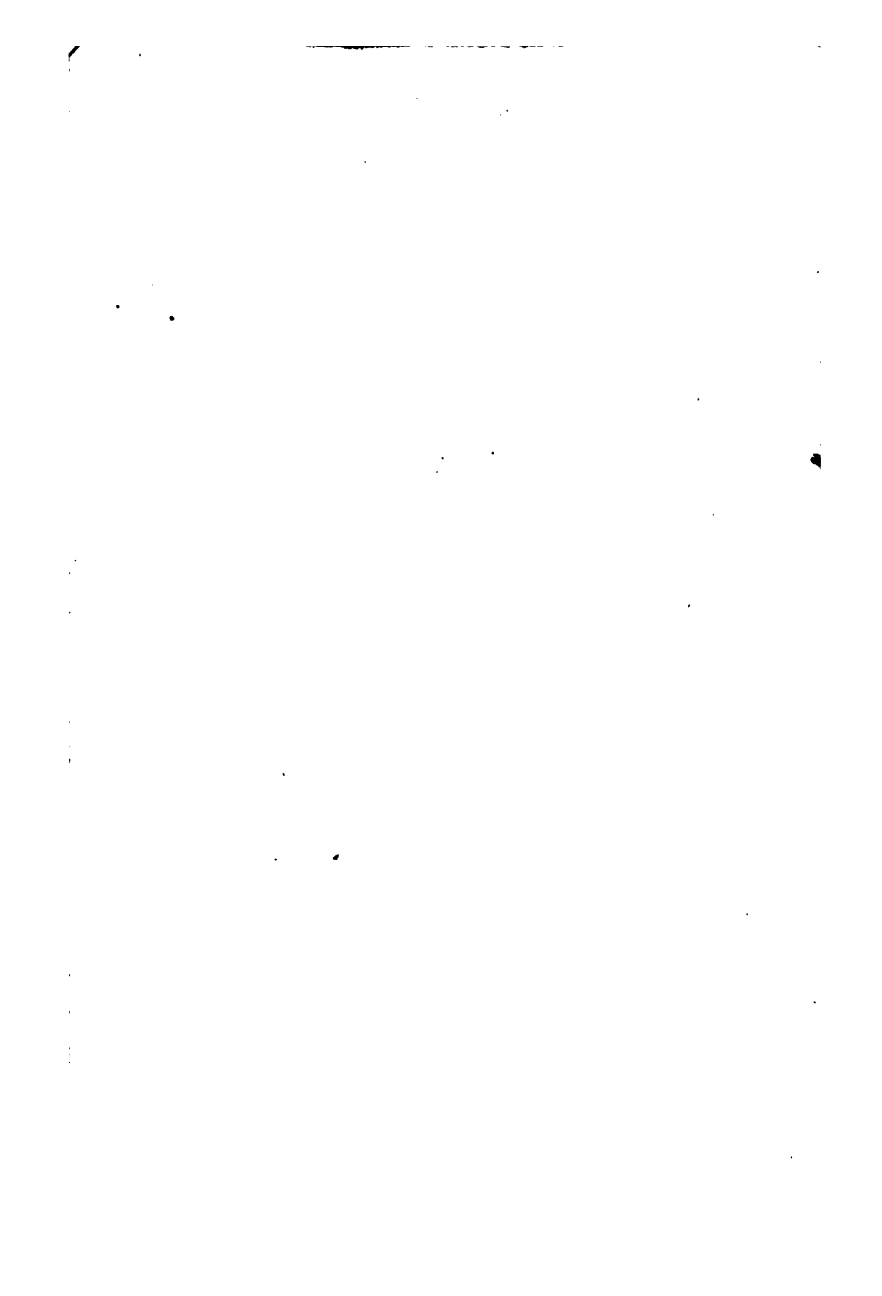
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1840.

384.







**LETTERS TO A CLERGYMAN.**

LONDON:  
PRINTED BY JOHN WERTHEIMER AND CO.  
CIRCUS PLACE, FINSBURY CIRCUS.

# LETTERS TO A CLERGYMAN,

ON THE BEST MEANS OF

EMPLOYING FUNDS FOR THE RELIGIOUS  
AND MORAL EDUCATION OF THE  
LOWER ORDERS,

BY

Mrs. HIPPISEY TUCKFIELD.



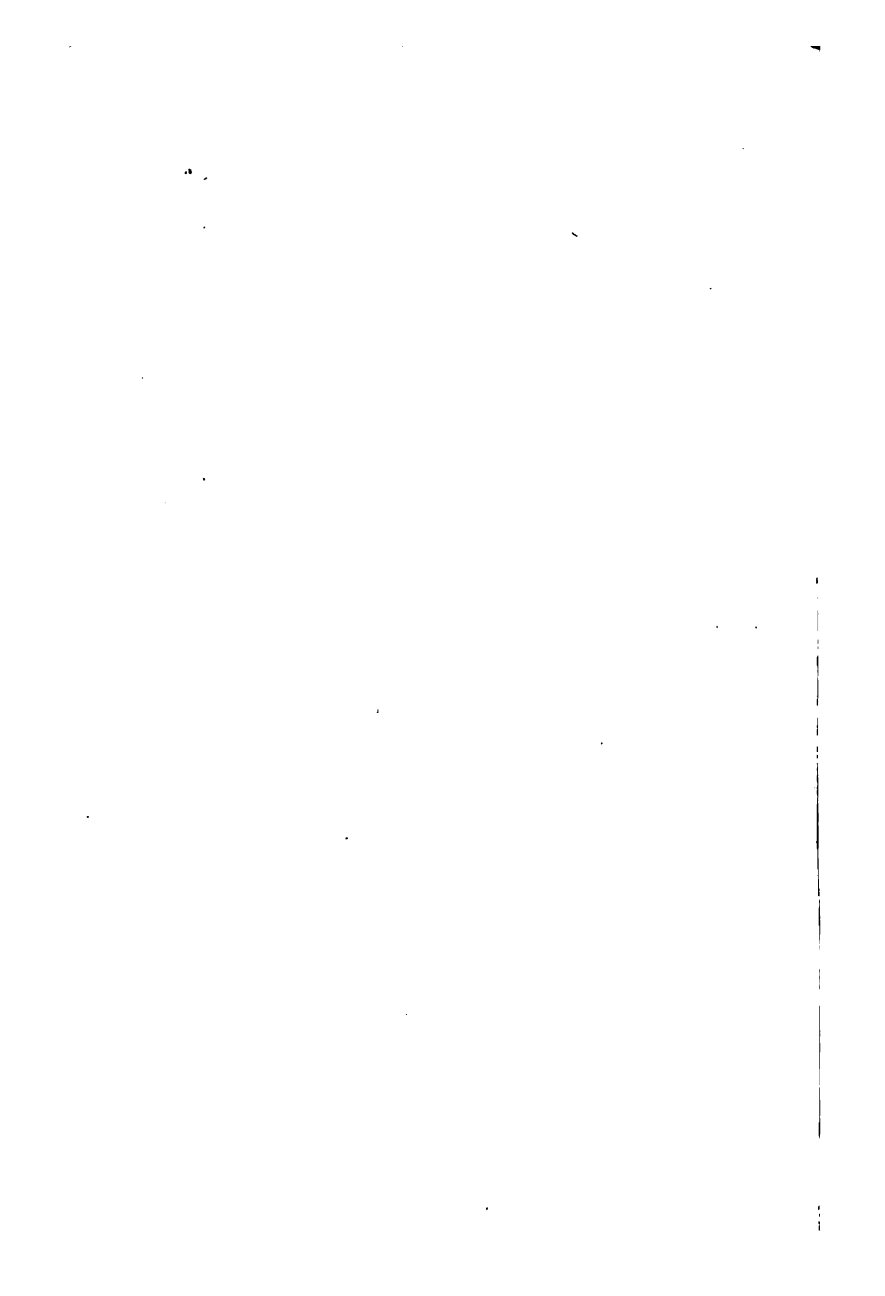
LONDON:

PRINTED FOR TAYLOR AND WALTON,  
28, UPPER GOWER STREET.

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# LETTERS TO A CLERGYMAN,

&c.

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## LETTER I.

My dear Friend,

I SHALL willingly comply with your request, and shall be happy if I can render you any assistance in the important duty which you are called upon to perform. You are placed in a situation of great responsibility, large educational funds being at your sole disposal. But by attending strictly to the terms of the will, and by applying these funds "*For discovering the best means of promoting the religious and moral education of the lower orders,*" you may, I trust, gradually throw some important light on subjects which, at this moment, appear to agitate and perplex the public mind.

The words of the will are very remarkable. No notice is taken of what we are now pleased to call *secular* education. But was that necessary? Would that education be religious and moral, which left a

man destitute of the knowledge needful to enable him to get his own living, and to make himself useful to himself and others, and thereby to do his duty in that state of life unto which it has pleased God to call him? The more we abound in true knowledge and wisdom, the better, surely, we shall be enabled to do our duty in our respective callings. The more freely we have received, the more freely we shall be able to give. Indeed, I have ever found it impossible to conceive how intellectual culture can be separated from religious and moral training. All knowledge, properly so called, whether it unfolds to us some of the wonderful works of God by which we are surrounded—whether it relates to the world which we inhabit, or to man, the lord of that world—whether it strengthens the powers and faculties which the Almighty has given us, or opens to us those varied sources of enjoyment, which, by the use of those faculties, he has enabled us to experience—all knowledge, I say, communicated in the right manner, in due degree, and at fit times, is but the handmaid to religion and virtue; and, on the other hand, it will also most certainly be found, that in proportion as the mind is purified and elevated by true religious principles and feelings, the natural healthy appetite for knowledge will be increased, and the soil prepared for

its reception. Vain, indeed, would be the attempt to separate intellectual, religious and moral training. These, and also physical training, are as closely connected, as indissolubly interwoven, as are the head, the heart, the bodily organs of man.\*

The first decided opinion which I will venture to offer, is, that you would not be assisted in the *discovery* which you are directed to make, by any master placed at the head of very large schools. It is quite impossible for such a master to establish that confidence and attachment between himself and his pupils which is indispensable, if the formation of religious and moral character is the object in view.

To this remark I am aware that you may reply, by reminding me that you are directed to discover the best means of giving religious and moral education to *the lower orders* : that cheap education can only be given in large schools ; that though the funds at your disposal are sufficiently ample to admit of many experimental schools on a small scale, yet that few instances of such unfettered bequests are likely to occur. You may therefore naturally be disposed to inquire, whether you would not be carrying out the views of the testator by developing such plans as promise to afford instruction to the great masses of

\* See Education for the People, p. 35.

the community, rather than by trying to invent a system of education, which, for want of requisite funds, would be generally impracticable.

I am aware of the grand dilemma to which we are apparently reduced by the necessity of devising the means of giving economical education; and before I fully unfold to you those plans which appear to me adapted to further our grand object, with respect to the masses of our uneducated population, I will at once broadly avow one conclusion at which I am arrived, which appears to me in some degree to meet this dilemma, and which, if acted upon, may, I hope, assist us in giving at once cheap and efficient religious and moral education to the lower orders. It is this, *that we ought to intrust not only the entire education of females to females, but also that boys and girls, till they are ten years old, may with advantage be educated together by females.*

In a future letter I will return to this point; and I will explain to you my reasons for arriving at this conclusion, and also the means by which, as I conceive, women ought to be prepared to perform those duties, and to fill that important station in society which I would thus assign to them, and for which Providence has pre-eminently qualified them.

In the remainder of my present letter, I would limit

myself to a brief outline of the plan of appropriating the large funds at your disposal, which I shall hereafter explain, and recommend in detail, and which would, I hope, be applicable to any large town circumstanced as is the one in which you reside.

I recommend the formation of three distinct educational establishments; and, if possible, they should all be within such a distance, that you may, as the Director and Chaplain of the whole Charity, be able to visit them daily, or as often as you see fit.

I. The *Female Institution*, consisting of:—

1. An Infantine School.
2. A Preparatory School of Industry for Boys and Girls under ten years of age.
3. A Girls' School for Girls from ten to fifteen.

And this institution should include accommodation for boarding twelve girls, who should be trained as future teachers of infant preparatory and girls' schools.\*

II. A School for Boys between the ages of ten and fifteen.†

\* These school-rooms to be opened from six to eight in the evening, for boys between the ages of ten and fifteen. *Vide* Letter IV.

† This school to be opened from six to eight in the evening, for youths between the ages of fifteen and twenty. *Vide* Letter IV.

III. Night-Schools, for Boys whose parents remove them early from day-schools.

IV. A Training Agricultural Boarding-School, for twenty Boys, to be educated for future masters.

Each of these distinct establishments must become the subject of future Letters; I will conclude my present letter by stating distinctly the opinion which I have formed, after some experience, and long and attentive consideration, respecting the admixture of different religious sects in the same schools.

By the will, to which you are bound to attend, you are directed to promote the religious and moral education,\* *generally*, of the lower orders.

Now, certainly, of the lower orders, a large proportion are dissenters; therefore, if, by admitting all denominations of Christians indifferently into the same schools, you were most likely to promote their religious and moral education, it would become your duty so to admit them. In your daily schools, it is my firm opinion, that by adhering to the plan of religious instruction which you saw Dr. B. carry on in the Manor Hall school, you will not find that many dissenters will object to send their children to them; more especially if, as he did, you allow of their absenting themselves on the Saturday or Wednesday after-

\* See Education for the People, Letters II., III., IV.

noon, or whenever you make the Church Catechism, or some of the doctrinal points of religion, more especially the topic of your instruction.

The case of boarding-schools is, however, quite different. Your boarders must attend the same place of worship; they must become attached and habituated to the same ritual, the same outward forms and ceremonies, unless you wish to render their Sunday a day of doubt and controversy, of useless discussion and injurious comparisons between different religious teachers,—unless you desire to convert your school into a hotbed for training controversialists. It is my firm conviction, that any attempt to intermix the children of different denominations of Christians, in a school where boarders are educated, would obstruct instead of furthering religious and moral education. This I say, on the supposition that a dissenter would object to the instruction which would be given to all, without exception, in your Church of England establishment. Should such an objection not exist with a dissenting parent, of course you could not refuse to receive his child. I will not enlarge on this topic; but will now conclude by merely asserting my opinion, that if, in your daily and nightly schools, you pursue that course of instruction to which no pious and rational dissenters ought to object, you are not



depriving them of the common advantages which all may enjoy ; whereas, by attempting to separate religious and secular instruction, in the manner I have heard proposed, you would deprive all instruction of its vivifying principle ; and, while you attempted to satisfy all, would benefit none. If, in your boarding-schools and Sunday-schools, you follow a more exclusive plan, you only set the dissenters an example, which, if they are sincere in their own religious views, they will be ready to follow, by establishing Sunday-schools and agricultural training-schools of their own ; and you would also pursue a course which, should any wealthy benevolent dissenter make a bequest similar to that which you have now at your disposal, a sole trustee, placed in your circumstances, would be bound and inclined to adopt.

Thus might we hope that gradually, as adventitious causes which have fermented the public mind give way,—as party spirit cools, and a more enlarged experience leads us to form correct views of the true nature of moral and religious education,—we might hope, I say, that Christians of different denominations might be able, not only daily to mingle themselves, but to allow their children daily to mingle and communicate, in studies, amusements, and in an interchange of all the charities of life, while yet they learned to

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respect those differences in peculiar views, and those affections to peculiar modes of worship, and distinctions in religious creeds, which, constituted as are the word of God and the mind of man, can, I believe, never cease to exist.

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## LETTER II.

My dear Friend,

IN my present letter, I will confine myself to the first of the three educational establishments, of which I recommended the formation, viz.—The Female Institution, including—1. An Infant; 2. A Preparatory; 3. A Girls' School. These three schools ought to be in connection with one another. Perhaps two rooms would be sufficient; one for the infants', the other for the preparatory or intermediate school, and the girls' school,—the girls occupying one side of the room, the boys and girls, between five and ten, arranged on the other side. It is desirable, though your own funds are ample, that your buildings and apparatus should not be on a scale which might dishearten those who cannot have the same advantages.

I imagine that possibly eventually about a hundred children might gradually be admitted into each of these schools; and I trust that you may secure a person qualified to be the directress and superintendent of all three. Experience must prove what number of assistants she may require to act under her; but there must be one leading mind, who must be imbued with

true educational views and principles, and who will be able gradually to infuse it into her subordinate agents.

The character of this governess will of course be a subject of primary and vital importance ; and I trust that you will spare no pains in endeavouring to secure the right person. She must have great firmness and self-possession, as well as genuine mildness and cheerfulness—*genuine*, for remember, children immediately detect any assumption of a quality which does not exist in reality. She will, if these qualities are united with strong sense, and an enthusiastic devotion to the young, be able to bring about a system of order and discipline, without creating that fear and restraint which would throw a disguise over the hearts and minds of children. She ought to possess an even temper, not easily upset and diverted from her purposes by accidental discouragements and ill success. When a failure occurs, the governess ought to search into its cause, and to modify and remould her system so as to guard against its recurrence. Her mind ought to be one fertile in resources, and ready, patiently and cheerfully, to alter and re-arrange her plans, so as to meet the exigencies of the case. It appears, for instance, to be a point of great importance that order and silence, in a school, should *necessarily* result from judicious arrangements, and a cheerful,

interesting manner of communicating instruction, rather than from a constant strict eye, from the fear of punishment or the hope of reward, or from that sort of discipline which prevents all play and expression of feeling, all natural developement of mind and understanding,—which reduces children to the state of automats, and which begets a certain degree of heartless insensibility to religious and moral instruction, however well texts, catechisms, and explanations may be repeated.

Your governess must be of a patient, persevering character ; she must not expect to work by magic ; she must resolve not to be discouraged if she does not succeed in establishing at once any exact order and discipline, especially as your first experiments must be made on children not previously well trained. She must look for an increase of order and discipline, in proportion as the tone of mind of the children becomes more gentle and civilised, and when a desire for improvement has been generated by that adaptation of their tasks to their capacities, which will make them feel experimentally the pleasure of successful efforts. It is earnestly to be desired that she should avoid the least approach to severity ; no voice should ever be lifted up in your female school ; no threatening gesture used of any kind ; gradually, by good manage-

ment and gentle affectionate *individual admonition* she will bring all about.

The power of giving skilfully individual admonition is one of the most important to acquire. There is a light, almost a cheerful way of reproving slight faults, which succeeds with many characters. Treat faults as much as possible as misfortunes; and let it be felt that you are like a guardian angel stepping in to assist in removing these evils, and in averting others which would crush all hopes of happiness. Impress your children with the conviction that it is your first object to assist them to become good, and let them feel that you only wish them to be so, in order that they may be happy.

Your governess must reside in a house closely adjoining to the school-rooms, and capable of affording accommodation for twelve girls, who should be received into the institution as boarders. This part of the establishment ought to be entirely self-supporting; as boarders should be taken from a class able to pay for their board and education, with a view to their being prepared for becoming future teachers. Probably, after the first year, your governess would not require, either in her girls', her preparatory, or her infant schools, any assistance beyond what might be afforded by the boarders, whom she could herself have trained.

But at first she would need at least three young women to co-operate with her in the three schools. From the school for elder girls between the ages of ten and fifteen, detachments ought constantly to be employed as assistants in the preparatory and infant schools; and the girls will thus be prepared for teachers or nursery-maids, or for educating their own families in the event of their becoming mothers.

In the rough outline of the plan which I propose to you, I cannot of course enter into details of measures, which experience, after all, must suggest. The great principle I wish to establish, is the importance of calling forth a far greater degree of female agency than we now employ in education, both with a view of improving the religious and moral education of the lower orders, and also of lessening the actual expenditure of educational funds, as many excellent female teachers might be trained who would be satisfied with low salaries. It is my firm opinion, not only that the care of infants of both sexes, and of girls of all ages, ought to be committed to women, but that boys under ten years of age may with advantage be educated by women. Boys may acquire in these preparatory schools, if well conducted, good reading and writing, and some knowledge of arithmetic, geography and natural history. They may be exercised in the acquisition of a pretty

copious classified vocabulary, accustomed to define words, and to express simple ideas accurately in chalk writing; they may also have learned linear drawing, and singing from notation, and may be ready to pass into self-instructing classes in the regular boys' school. The amount, however, of intellectual instruction is not the point which I have chiefly in view: women are certainly fully competent to learn and to teach all that it is requisite for boys of ten years old to know; but it is in laying the foundation of future principles, exciting the first religious emotions, gently curbing the rebellious will, winning the heart, and obtaining an unlimited sway over the whole character by mildness and affection, it is in all these respects, that women will be found far more powerful and efficient agents than men.

It is the manner in which instruction is given, far more than its nature or amount, which operates beneficially on the character; exactness, patience, and the most perfect composure of mind, mixed with the most persuasive mildness, these are the qualities which will insure some religious and moral effect from any instruction, however meagre the nature, however small the quantity, imparted to little children. Besides this, there is one species of instruction particularly useful in the case of poor little boys under ten years of



age which women only can give ; I mean knitting, netting, straw-plaiting, and coarse needle-work ; it will be found useful as a means of early instilling the principle that manual labour is honourable ; and that children come to school, not only to learn to read and cypher, but to learn to get their living, in that state of life into which it has pleased God to call them. But the advantage I have principally in view is a constant alternation of manual and intellectual labour, a point which, I think, by no means meets with the attention it deserves. It should never be lost sight of in any stage of education. But especially before a child has reached its tenth year, all excitement of the brain should be avoided ; and yet, from five to ten, it is peculiarly necessary to subdue the will, and tranquillise the passions, by introducing habits of fixed occupation. Linear drawing and good writing may both be considered as manual labour, and are particularly fit occupations for young children.

Good writing and cyphering is frequently, by the parents of poor children, considered the most essential—indeed, the only essential part of education. This is, of course, in a worldly point of view. Now, it strikes me, considering the subject in a philosophical, perhaps I might say, in a moral point of view, that very good, neat penmanship is a point which ought

to be much attended to. Much good is done to the character by exacting some manual labour which requires accuracy, patience, and attention. Great attention must be paid to the sitting upright, the right method of holding the pen, and the formation of every letter. The usual way of teaching writing does harm, instead of good, to the moral character. Children are allowed to sit crumpled over a desk, the pen slanting away from their shoulder, the figure all awry, the letters one more misshapen than another. In order to render the art of penmanship a moral process, the great educational principle of a *little and well* must be attended to. A child, when making a stroke, a *t* and *a*, &c., should exert all its energies to make it exactly like the copy. After a line of strokes, pot-hooks, and hangers, or single letters, have been written, the children should be made to compare their efforts with the copy. "What is the difference between your *a* and that in the copy? Is the bar in your *t* horizontal or slanting? is it too high or too low?" In short, let children feel that, from the moment they enter the school, a pains-taking state of mind is required, and that however little is done, it must be done well. The moral effect of such lessons is great, and will influence the character through life. After the writing lesson I have described is over, the discovery will have been

silently but experimentally made, that there is real pleasure in the exercise of attention, and in doing things as well as they can be done. It is astonishing how much time is lost, how much harm is done in schools, by allowing, day after day, bad reading and bad writing. I have the greatest horror of bad reading, and a great desire to introduce generally distinct articulation and good reading over the kingdom. Poor children never open their mouths, never articulate distinctly, and never dwell on their words; and the most slovenly indistinct utterance is acquired, which it is very difficult afterwards to cure.\* In these female preparatory schools, I would therefore recommend, that the greatest attention should be given to the ground-work of distinct articulation and really good writing. I would here observe on the necessity of admitting but very few children into your female and preparatory schools for the first few months; and also on the need of affording to your governess, at first, a sufficient number of assistant teachers. The most laborious attention from a teacher to each individual child is requisite, in order to establish at first this careful, exact process in reading and writing. When once a few

\* The best method of curing it is, obliging children to dictate sentences, word by word, to a teacher standing at a distance, who must write the words on a black board or painted wall from this dictation.

children read and write really well, the rest will soon imitate them; and a good style of reading and writing will be introduced as a *sine quâ non* into the school—no other being, even for a moment, tolerated.\*

In towns, garden-work, the best of all occupations, cannot be procured,† and it may often be difficult to introduce drilling and gymnastics. Vocal music, as well as linear drawing, is in some degree a substitute; but, at all events, the regular employment of the fingers a portion of the day is possible every where, and it appears to me to have an immediate moral effect on the young; and, a poor boy in after-life will often find it an advantage to be able to mend his own clothes, and darn his own stockings. All teachers must have found the difficulty of making children keep their hands quiet. They pull their books, their dress, to pieces; they provide, if possible, some little treasure in their pockets—a flower, a marble, a stick, a bit of rag to twist about—and the reiterated command, “Lock arms,” “Hands behind you,” “Stand

\* The subject is an important one; for good penmanship, once acquired, writing exercises, transcribing, and composition, will become most useful in a subsequent stage of education, and will go far towards superseding the monitorial system in the boys’ school.

† In many village schools, where boys and girls are educated together, it will be found possible to employ the boys a part of the day in a school garden, under a labourer.

quiet," prove that it is often our ineffectual endeavour to render motionless those limbs which Nature says, Use, move, employ. Employ them in a way of which they can see the use, in working for some given end, you will immediately perceive a degree of tranquil satisfaction, which will prove to you that you are operating beneficially on their dispositions and characters. They are acting in obedience to your orders, and experimentally learning the benefit of obedience. The work that grows under their fingers, proves demonstratively that they have powers to exercise, which it is both honourable and agreeable to exert. Whether the straw-plait lengthens, the garter, the stockings, the bit of patch-work, there is an inward satisfaction generated—a sort of self-respect, because they themselves are the contrivers of something useful. Their work is before them, and they desire to shew you they can do more, and do better. Besides this knitting, netting, or sewing, &c., by introducing the painted walls and boards and chalk into your schools, you may easily provide an endless means for mixing manual and intellectual labour. I am most anxious to see these painted walls introduced in every school throughout the kingdom. They are useful in every stage of education, but especially in all the elementary processes. They afford the means of

giving children quiet employment, which may be varied so as never to overstrain the mind.

The introduction of silent individual occupations cannot be too strongly recommended; they occupy without exciting noise or bustle, and without any desire of display. Even in infant-schools, black boards and painted walls may be used as the very best and quickest process for fixing attention in teaching reading, writing, arithmetic, linear drawing, and music to young children, and it is astonishing how very soon young children will delight in endeavouring to make straight lines, and form well-shaped letters on the walls or boards.

I know that it is possible to keep little children quiet and attentive by telling stories, talking to them, shewing pictures, and by all the little devices practised in common infant-schools. But the fatigue to the teacher is immense. The well-known story is screamed out at the entrance of every visitor; words omitted for the children to supply. The same ten or twelve quick or bold children start up again and again to answer the often repeated questions, while the timid or dull remain silent and unemployed. Now, these pretty little practices are good in themselves, their object being the amusement and relaxation of a part of the morning and afternoon; but chalking,

knitting, and needle-work ought to be the regular employment of all the children above four years old.

Children between two and four or five should be separated from the rest, and subjected to a different sort of care : not kept in a constant state of excitement, or obliged always to move by word of command ; allowed to sleep, jump, look at pictures, count sticks or stones, learn letters, and hear pretty stories ; but as soon as ever the little hands can be employed, something should be found for them to do.

It would lead me too far were I more fully to describe the manner in which eyes, hands, and fingers may be pleasantly set at work in infant and preparatory schools. My object is merely to prove to you that females, and *females alone*, are capable of inventing, employing, and varying these processes, and of mingling them with lessons of child-like piety and wisdom—capable in short of being the intelligent, affectionate mothers of large families.

In many cases, poor children cannot be kept at school after ten, and these intermediate or preparatory schools must supply all the daily instruction which their parents either can or will afford them ; and the Sunday school and night school must be depended on for further improvement. In agricultural districts few boys remain at school beyond this age ; and in

many cases there are no funds to support regular boys' schools. The great demand in country villages at this time is for well-trained village school *mistresses*. In fact, I feel persuaded that by preparing females to instruct well in these intermediate preparatory industrial schools, the pressing wants of this nation for good teachers would be more than half supplied. In towns, the infant schools would be delivered from children of seven and eight, who interfere with the properly infantine character of these useful, large nurseries; and the masters of elder boys' schools would be enabled to adopt a superior mode of instruction to that carried on at present when their attention was no longer distracted by an immense number of little boys between seven and ten, who overcrowd every national school, while they generally learn much evil from the elder boys.\*

\* The master, delivered from this by far the most troublesome part of his school, would be enabled to divest himself of the disciplinarian character which he assumes to keep them in what is called order, and to adopt rather the character of the friend and elder brother of his boys, and to pursue a more rational and interesting sort of education, which would introduce a more true sort of discipline than the apparent discipline now to be seen in large schools—a discipline which would be likely to be felt out of school, as well as in school,—to make a child feel that, whether his master is present or absent, he has a monitor within his own breast, which, unless he obeys, he cannot be happy.



You may naturally ask whether I would not advise you to open a boarding-school, not only for girls, but also for adult candidate female teachers, in order to supply, as quickly as possible, the demand for those valuable instructresses. I think not. Many reasons occur to my mind discouraging the expectation that females, collected from different quarters into the same house, can have their characters so wrought upon, as that their former tastes and habits shall be changed, new views imparted to their minds, and that *communicating instinct*, instilled into their dispositions, essential to the efficiency of any rules or system, and without which no rules or systems will avail.

I should fear that grown-up young women thus assembled together may not do each other much good. I think that any course of reading or questioning they may go through in their boarding-house during a few months, even under an enlightened instructress, will but ill supply the probable want of all foundation with which they arrive, or fill up, to any purpose, the gaps which exist in all uneducated minds, and baffle the best schemes laid down for their improvement.

Besides, it is a mistake to suppose that any given actual amount of knowledge is needful to enable teachers to succeed in their profession. It is the

character, the tone of mind, much more than the actual information possessed, which is important. A gentle, intelligent female, loving children, and desirous to improve them, will always keep a-head of her pupils in learning. There is even some advantage which a teacher experiences who is not primed with an immense number of facts which she is very desirous to impart.

It is astonishing how well pleased children are if the teacher, in answer to a question, says, "I do not know; I will try to find out, and I will tell you to-morrow." It is such an encouragement to them to find that the teacher is ascending the hill with them, and but little a-head of them. It is far more important to know how to teach them the little you know, than to possess great stores of knowledge which you have power of imparting agreeably.

The only method of putting adults into the way of learning the principles of education, and of imbibing the teaching instinct, is by allowing them to have access to your infant, preparatory, and girl's schools hereafter, when they are fairly in action, and when they can see the effect of the steady, yet gentle, insinuating process of instruction which your governess and her young agents are carrying on.

In your large city there must be many young

women residing with some members of their own families, who, without being received into a boarding-school, might be allowed to attend by day under certain regulations, in order to become acquainted with the principles on which you act; and who might receive an explanation of the plans you are adopting, or varying, in order to carry out those principles into action. They may be informed that the same means you are trying can be modified, and either partially or wholly adopted, as local circumstances point out, in the schools which they may be called on to conduct. They may catch something of the spirit in which you are proceeding, and may possibly even be useful by suggesting different means of arriving at the same ends, if, instead of mistaking means for ends, they are capable of appreciating those you have in view; and if they have not this capability—if they imagine that they can educate by using certain books, and adopting certain mechanical arrangements—they had better not lose their time, or deceive those who wish to employ them, by any three or six months spent in a training school, even though it should be called a *model school*.

By the bye, let me request you not to call any of your schools *model schools*. We are all on a voyage of discovery. We are but gradually ascertaining

what objects we are in search of, and what the best means to reach those objects. The word *model* school implies a degree of perfection, which, in the progressive state in which we are placed in this world, we shall never reach while the world lasts.

You will naturally ask, But how are these village school-mistresses, and the teachers of your infant and preparatory schools, to be obtained for the present generation, for we cannot wait till your girls have been trained in your boarding-school ; and you give only some hope that a few may, by looking on, catch the true educating spirit?

I will answer by a bold prophecy, that, when the ground-work of all education is fairly given up into the hands of women, well-educated ladies, in every part of the kingdom, will immediately be encouraged to devote their abundant leisure to assist in superintending schools, conducted solely by females ; and thus not only will the difficulty arising from the present want of efficient mistresses be in a measure overcome, but also a better and more refined tone of manners will be introduced, and the gentle and softening influence of cheerfulness and kindness, all powerful with children, will be called into play. The atmosphere of the infantine, the preparatory, and the girls' school will become one of peace, hope, love, and joy,

and the countenances of the children will soon beam with affection and confidence.

The clergy will find they have no co-operators more able and efficient than well-educated females; that there are none through whose instrumentality they can so effectually simplify and bring home to the hearts and consciences of children the great truths of our holy religion.

It must be admitted that at present we are without a competent number of efficient female teachers in our middle classes, capable of carrying out this work of love. It must, alas ! be admitted, that perhaps but a comparatively small number of those who occupy the higher ranks of society, have at present discovered the road to usefulness and happiness which lies open before them. But this is surely the moment, now that the attention of all is so powerfully roused, when thousands, who have not yet entered upon the career of vanity and dissipation, may stay their steps on the brink of the precipice ; and may in their respective homes, whether their influence can be exerted in cities, towns, or villages, raise themselves in the scale of human happiness, by helping to raise others.

In every neighbourhood, in every city, in every town, I had almost said in every village, some humble females might be found, who perhaps have seen better

days, scarcely knowing how to keep up a decent appearance, and who possess those feelings, those powers and affections, with which Providence has endowed the minds of women, and more than half prepared them to be the guardians of the young. Only let those more favored by heaven, and placed in ease and affluence, seek them out, treat them with respect and kindness, and draw forth their untried powers by encouragement and co-operation.

Then may be discovered many daughters of penury and affliction, who are now, in their obscure homes, labouring at fancy-work or embroidery, and, almost hopelessly, filling our bazaars with an endless variety of things, for which no use can be found. Many, who, perhaps recollecting that their fathers were once engaged in honourable professions, and fearing to disgrace themselves by teaching the lower orders, are advertising hopelessly for situations as cheap day-governesses, or companions to elderly ladies. Let these only be sought out, and assisted and encouraged to step forward boldly, and they will soon prove that there is no occupation more dignified, or more honourable, than that of cultivating the wide-spreading and desolate fields, where vice and ignorance are blasting the germs of virtue and intellect, which, under their instrumentality, may burst forth and bloom and

blossom even in eternity ! May I not be allowed to address the young, the affluent, and highly-educated in the words of inspiration—"The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into the harvest."

## LETTER III.

My dear Friend,

IN my last letter I endeavoured to direct your attention to my opinions respecting the great importance of calling into action the dormant and neglected power and energy of females, in order to lay a solid foundation of religious and moral education. I urged your establishing a Female Institution as an object of primary and vital importance—and I recommended that this establishment should comprise an infantine, and an intermediate school for boys and girls below ten years of age, and a school for girls between ten and fifteen. I advised you to add to this institution a boarding-school for training assistant teachers; and I advised that the whole institution, when fairly in action, should be opened, under certain regulations, for the daily admission of candidate adult female teachers.

I now proceed to the second educational institution which I mentioned in my first letter—viz. a Day-school for Boys between the ages of ten and fifteen. At the first commencement of the series of schools I recommend, you will labour under disadvantages



which I flatter myself will lessen every year. In the preparatory school belonging to the female institution, in which children are to be admitted between the ages of five and ten, you will find little or no difficulty, when your little boys and girls are transferred from the large, well-regulated nurseries which infantine schools ought to be. In the boys' school, which I am now about to describe to you, you will find that, when once good intermediate schools exist, at least half the master's work has been done beforehand. For boys will come from the female preparatory schools comparatively apprehensive, well-mannered, they will have learned to look on school as a place of happiness, instead of punishment, and to consider an increase of knowledge as an increase of that happiness ; they will come prepared to confide in and love their master, as they have hitherto loved and trusted their kind and gentle mistress.

Let the master beware lest he destroy these anticipations. On the preservation of love, trust, and confidence, will depend the continuance of the religious and moral education, of which love, trust, and confidence were the foundation. I ought, perhaps, here to observe, that by affection and gentleness I do not mean any approach to that sort of familiarity which would lessen respect. A master may excite the

fullest and tenderest feelings of confidence and affection, and relieve the minds of children from all that restraint which would prevent their showing their own natural feelings, and yet not approach towards any unbecoming familiarity. A cheerful, light-hearted, and even occasionally a playful manner, will secure affection without lessening respect; at no time will children feel more convinced of the internal dignity, and the conscious power of a master, than when he proves that he is not afraid of losing it, by allowing himself to be merry with them as well as wise—that he feels his authority so secure, that he is not straining to keep it up.

Hope, peace, and joy,—let these be the first objects in every school. A master ought to watch the first indication of good feeling playing on the countenance of a boy whose character is defective, and may allude in a cheerful encouraging manner to the comfort and pleasure it gives him. A slight allusion will be enough, and may light up the dormant spark, and kindle a flame which may overcome evil tendencies, only strengthened and confirmed by reproof or punishment. O! how much more of good is concealed within the human heart than we are apt to believe, when we only communicate with characters which have been hardened by suspicion and severity,

instead of having been softened and subdued by love and kindness.

But to return from the digression into which I have been led by my dread of disciplinarian pedagogism, you will observe, that to this boys' school I do not advise you to attach any boarding-school. Your day-school must necessarily be in the heart of your town. I write to you as the inhabitant of a populous city, and under the impression that it is your duty to employ your funds for the benefit of your fellow-citizens; and it is for this reason that an agricultural boys' day-school is not mentioned in my scheme. In agricultural districts it must be hoped that many of these invaluable institutions will soon exist. Though possibly you might, with your funds, obtain a piece of ground for building in the outskirts of your city, to which a garden might be attached, yet, as this cannot be the case in general, I think that you had better endeavour to meet the difficulties which must be encountered in the education of children residing in populous cities. And as in such cases, innocent, exhilarating out-door's exercise cannot easily be obtained, and the usual sources of contamination out of school hours cannot be avoided, I think it is better not to attempt to train future teachers in these boys' day-schools. A separate establishment for this purpose you will observe

to be mentioned in the outline of the plan contained in my first letter, and the details of it will form the subject of a future letter.

The case is very different with respect to the female institution. When the girls belonging to the boarding-house walk out, it will be, of course, under the care either of their governess, or of some trusty deputed agent. But boys who are twelve, fourteen, and fifteen years old, cannot be placed in ranks, two and two, and driven along by an usher, in order to refresh and exhilarate their minds. Day boys walk home to their dinners, and again at night to their supper; and in some few cases the domestic care is useful. But these day-schools, of course, must always be liable to great disadvantages from the bad characters of many of the parents, and the contamination of various kinds to which the children are exposed. It is not therefore in connexion with these schools that future teachers ought to be trained; at the same time, it may be hoped that such schools may gradually stem the torrent of evil, and do much good by the insensible influence which the instruction of the children may exercise over the minds of their parents.

I have lately seen a plan adopted, which I think likely to prove useful, and well calculated to counteract, in a measure, the disadvantages I have alluded

to. A supply of cards is provided, containing each one short text, proverb, or short fact in geography, natural history, natural philosophy, domestic economy; and I think that short spelling lessons, and easy lessons in language, might be included. A different card is lent to each child every evening, to be brought back the next morning, when some account of its contents is required. A little work, entitled "Night Tasks for Day-Schools," now in the press, will, I hope, be found useful. It consists of what may be termed a set of little horn-books, each containing short lessons similar to what I have described, and to be employed in the same manner.

Great advantage might accrue from thus enabling our poorer families to accumulate, as it were by morsels, accurate information on various subjects. I am persuaded that the parents, on meeting their children after the day's work, would soon become as anxious to inquire about the evening's lesson as the children would be to exhibit it. The proverb, or text, or fact, would often be the means of enlivening their frugal meal by the rational conversation arising out of it. Thus the suitableness of the moral lesson to the peculiar circumstances of the family, might afford great though indirect benefit. For example, it is scarcely possible but the attention of a quarrelsome,

discontented household would be attracted by such texts as these :—" Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith." " Be kindly affectioned one to another in brotherly love," &c.

At the same time the facts relating to heat, the properties of substances, &c. would awaken intelligent interest either in the ordinary domestic operations, or in the employment of the family.

The concentrated information in religious and general knowledge which is imparted in the short sentences which I have described, might, I think, be most valuable to children employed in manufactories, whose education is so lamentably neglected. I can scarcely think that master-manufacturers would not devise some means by which these "night-tasks" might be rendered available to them.

There is one observation I would here take occasion to make, which does not seem to have occurred to educators in general. It is, that the original difference between the minds of boys and girls, seems to point out the propriety of employing girls as assistants in teaching much earlier than boys. Girls from ten to fifteen may be most profitably employed as helpers in the infant and preparatory schools, provided always that you watch narrowly against a conceited dictatorial disposition, which, if it once become inve-

terate, will utterly disable the most promising girl from being ever after a valuable school-mistress. A quiet, a merely benevolent pleasure in amusing and being useful to the little ones, may, however, be associated in a girl's mind with the instinctive desire to be like a little mother. Observe a little girl, even with her doll: how quietly and patiently she will pretend to teach her to spell, and repeat all the little stories and directions which nurse and mama have reiterated to herself. But did any one ever observe a boy amuse himself in this way? The task of teaching, I have observed, is, with few exceptions, irksome to the minds of boys. They, in general, with difficulty learn the little, gentle, insinuating methods which girls may easily be led to adopt. If, indeed, a little monitor is allowed to assume a sharp dictatorial tone of voice, and commanding pompous gestures, then, indeed, it may be otherwise, for a feeling of superiority, and the love of a little brief authority will sweeten every toil. But I know no sight from which I turn with such heart-sickening feelings as from these poor little upstart flippan monitors, who are themselves the victims of the unnatural state of mind they are taught to assume, and are rendering others the victims of the deadening mechanical teaching they are practising.

I do not deny that at intervals a master may select some very gentle, patient, steady boys to assist in the mechanical processes of writing, arithmetic, or linear drawing; and that assistants in overlooking and correcting written exercises may be very useful.

But the truth is, that after a boy is passed nine or ten years old, when he will have left one of my projected female institutions, there will be most often found something naturally ardent and vivacious in his mind, if it has been judiciously developed, and not deadened by mechanical processes. He begins to long to be at work to advance himself, and to use energetically those growing powers, of which at that age he will always feel conscious, when relieved from the oppressive weight of dull uninteresting tasks.

You may now fairly ask me how I could, with but one master, dispense with the regular monitorial system, as practised in the National and British and Foreign Schools, and how I would introduce a system of instruction which is to have these wonderfully exhilarating effects?

I answer, first, this will be greatly facilitated by the exclusion of all little boys under ten. And, secondly, I say, after that age only help your boys to help themselves. Make it your first object to



discover every means of introducing a sort of self-instructing process into your school. You will recollect, that I suppose your boys to have all been taught in the female schools to read, to write, and to express themselves with some degree of accuracy on black boards and painted walls. I will just recall your attention to the visits we made together to the boys' school at ———. It consisted of one hundred boys,—recollect, I do not advise you to admit more than that number in any one school. You remember that one fourth of this number were generally engaged in the workshops ; and as manual and intellectual labour ought in every stage of education to be alternated, I trust that your little knitters, netters, and straw-plaiters, will, when they enter the boys' school, become tailors, shoemakers, and carpenters ; in which case, of course, some extra assistance must be paid for. This cannot, I fear, be afforded in all instances, but linear drawing and vocal music may be substituted, and in most cases some manual occupation may be devised. The work carried on in the preparatory school will have prepared boys for tailors' work, and occasional help from a tailor or shoemaker may be had on reasonable terms. The assistance of a drill sergeant may generally be obtained, and will be found highly valuable.

The present fashionable plan of a gallery at the end of a long school-room, in which all the children of different ages and capacities are assembled for oral instruction, may not, I believe, be in all cases the best arrangement; at least I would strongly advise all who are opening school-rooms, and who have not prepared their gallery, to pause and to reconsider the subject. Perhaps my experience is not sufficiently enlarged to justify me in giving a positive opinion on this subject, but yet I will not shrink from telling you what has occurred to me respecting these fashionable gallery exhibitions. I have often witnessed them with pain. The teacher, with perhaps a hundred or a hundred and fifty boys before him, is attempting a task frequently beyond the powers of a single individual. The energies and physical strength of a master are scarcely equal to it, and it is entirely hopeless for a female to attempt it. The master selects a subject which may be well calculated to excite a spirit of enquiry—it may be a bird, an insect, a plant, of which he has provided himself with a specimen. He attempts to adapt his explanation to the capacity of all, and at first succeeds in attaining the desired ellipse quickly and generally supplied; and if his language is somewhat idiomatic and liable to assume certain forms with which the children soon become familiar (and

from this fault I have scarcely seen a teacher wholly exempt), the effort becomes more easy, and the responses more general. But the interest soon begins to fail, and with disappointment visibly depicted on his countenance, the master is often obliged to call upon some unhappy slumberers to awake, with a remonstrance or rebuke at their inattention. The cause is evident—attempting to address all, he has imagined that all were keeping pace with him, and following the thread of his lecture; whereas he has been gradually going beyond them, and boy after boy has dropped astern, till at last the answer or ellipse always proceeding from the same bench or corner, at the end of the hour he discovers that only two or three of the more advanced have kept up with him. All is to be done over again, and the hour has been wasted, perhaps worse than wasted. The minds of so many children cannot be expected to be so evenly matched as simultaneously to catch the meaning of the master. Nor is it necessary that they should, provided the class is of that size that a quick eye can at once detect those who by their vacant countenance and silence show that they are at a loss. No injury is sustained by the rest while the master pauses to simplify his explanation for the instruction of these less apprehensive characters. But what eye can command the numbers that are often

assembled in one gallery? Who can trace the faint smile which lights up the countenance as each new idea comes across the mind, or mark the vacant stare which shews that the words have fallen unheeded or misunderstood? Again, by not being able to watch the impression made by his remarks on each child, the master loses many a valuable opportunity of adding an appropriate moral to his tale; or of dropping an observation which may go home to a mind, not easily to be reached in any other more direct way, but at these few happy moments ready to receive a seed, which, if thus seasonably planted, will bring forth its own fruit in due time, though perhaps when least expected.

I would advise you then never to assemble for simultaneous instruction more than a fourth of the number I have mentioned above. If your school were divided into four classes of about five and twenty each, three of these might always be engaged in quiet manual employment, while the other received a reading lesson or oral lecture from the master, who would take each class in succession.

A plan has occurred to me: for two semi-circular, or rather horse-shoe shaped benches, one within another, calculated to afford seats to about thirty children, say twelve in the inner circle, eighteen on the outer circle. These horse-shoe frames may be con-

structed so as to be separated into three or four portions, or joined in one as wanted, and would afford, when separated, convenient seats for small classes; two sets of such horse-shoe frames, if brought in contact with each other, would even answer the purpose of a gallery, should it be wanted.

In industrial schools such double rows of circular benches would facilitate the very desirable plan of making one half of a large class work, and listen while the other half is reading, and thus help to lessen the number of monitors or helpers required,—an object so much to be aimed at. For let us ever remember, that no teaching is far better than bad teaching. The plan I have here suggested requires, however, to be tested by experience.

To return from this long digression to our visit to ——— school, you recollect that while twenty-five were engaged in the work-shops, of the remaining seventy-five, one fourth were practising very good writing, and working out, and entering into books, arithmetical sums; one or two boys engaged in the same occupation generally acting as leaders or helpers. Of the remaining classes, some were employed in reading different chapters and passages of Scripture which had been pointed out, and in answering given questions, or writing their

own reflections on these portions of Holy Writ, others were defining words by the help of the dictionary, and reading to themselves portions of books, of which they were afterwards expected to give an account on their slates. Others, with the help of gazetteers and maps, were answering geographical questions on the painted walls. Some were transcribing into blank books passages they had selected, and wished to become possessed of, and these books were often purchased by themselves, and were to be their own to take home.

The master was generally surrounded by one class at a distant end of the room, where reading, in a subdued tone of voice, or oral instruction, was going on ; and, in rotation, these classes were dismissed to the walls, and the black boards or slates, to work out some question, or to give the statement of the oral instruction which they had received. They were always allowed to assist each other, without observation or enquiry. Frequently boys who were found sufficiently advanced, carried on their own appointed studies by themselves in the class room.

You recollect the order and tranquillity which reigned in the class-room on the Sunday we spent at Dr. — ; and with how much pleasure and intelligence the given references in Bibles were studied,

and afterwards different answers returned on slates, to questions proposed. You remember too, how, in the adjoining room, the painted walls and slates were covered with different portions of the catechism, well and accurately written. Some *vivâ voce* examination was also going on. Two or three of the oldest boys who had shown the necessary teaching disposition, were employed in overlooking the junior classes.

We certainly want books to assist masters in preparing these useful writing and dictating exercises. A well-digested set of writing and dictating lessons, and detailed instructions for carrying out this self-instructing process, for the use of schools, is much needed. Such a work, I hear, is in a course of preparation. And there is no doubt but that a demand will soon create a supply, and this demand will be found to increase in proportion as the use of black boards, &c., shall be introduced and appreciated, as class-reading comes to be discontinued, and as writing from memory, from dictation, and lessons on language are substituted in its stead.\*

If once you succeed in giving children some pretty

\* These lessons on language are of primary importance. It is much to be desired that a School Masters' Assistant, containing hints for lessons on language and dictating lessons, should be published.

good knowledge of the meaning of words, it is astonishing how much miscellaneous instruction they will acquire by themselves. The very limited vocabulary of the children of the poor and of the middle classes, and their vague ideas of the very words they know and use, are the greatest impediments to improvement. Their strange mistaken apprehensions of the meaning of the simplest terms, is well known to those who are practically engaged in the education of the lower orders. It is certainly of the first importance to give the habit of never using a word without being able to attach a precise meaning to it. The importance of such a habit to *intellectual* progress is evident; but perhaps its tendency, in a moral point of view, has not been sufficiently observed upon. Indeed, I know not that I have ever met with any of the views which experience has rendered familiar to my mind, adequately developed. It seems to me that there are numberless ill effects on the human character arising from the use of vague, undefined terms; that it engenders self-deception and presumption; that it undermines an early love of truth, and all aptitude for accurate research. On the other hand, the habit of attaching clear ideas to every expression, seems to me to engender a taste for truth, a taste for research, and an experimental



conviction that nothing is satisfactory and delightful but what we can apprehend clearly ourselves, and communicate distinctly to others. The clear apprehension of ideas, of course, facilitates the ready habit of clear candid expression of thought and feeling. While people are struggling to find words to express vague ideas, they become ashamed of speaking at all. And I cannot help suspecting, that the habit of accurately defining words, and of never passing over one not defined, has had a strong, however indirect, influence in the formation of those characters which are remarkable for truth and candour.

I think the same plan which I proposed in the female institution, with respect to adult candidate teachers, might be also introduced into your boys' day school.

Well recommended young men might be allowed to attend the school, with a view of seeing the various modes of instruction adopted, and of having the principles on which the moral management of the school depended explained to them.

And, although such men might not be able entirely to follow out your exact plan, yet if they caught something of the calm rational spirit in which you were encouraging enquiry after truth, and helping on a spirit of self-instruction, and thus laying the foundation

of a religious and moral character, they would not have looked on in vain.

But it is in your boys' training school, the third institution I proposed to you, that you must hope to prepare teachers fitted to train the future generations of our population. It is in these you must attempt to form those high, self-devoted, virtuous and noble characters, who by their example may become shining lights to thousands.

I reserve training schools for the topic of my last letter : but before I enter upon this important subject, I must detail to you my views respecting one of scarcely inferior importance, i. e. the establishment of night schools.

## LETTER IV.

My dear Friend,

HAVING in my previous letters explained my views respecting the female establishment and the boys' school I wish you to set on foot, I proceed to the subject of evening schools, which I believe might almost be self-supported, and would require but a trifling portion of the sums at your command. These schools appear to me of such importance, that they call for the serious consideration of all who wish to meet the actual pressing wants of our increasing demoralized population—of all who would leave no means untried by which the frightful increase of juvenile depravity in our large cities may be arrested.

Those who are experimentally acquainted with the lower orders, are aware, that however anxious parents may be to send their children to school before the age of ten or twelve, yet that it is very seldom that they can or will deprive themselves of the little earnings which they may obtain after that age, in order to continue their school education.

It is at that early age, therefore, that all moral control over them is given up, and little or no attention

is paid to their conduct or character.\* If they have previously acquired some knowledge of reading and writing, it is soon forgotten ; and, employed as errand boys, shop boys, or apprenticed to different trades, their religious instruction stands a bad chance, even should the words learned by heart, either catechisms or Scripture references, linger a little longer in their memories. The only control exercised over them is with reference to their prescribed daily work. Provided they execute this, their employers too often care little what they do, feel, or think. I am far from asserting that in many instances masters may not be desirous that these evils should be avoided, and were good night schools established, they would be thankful to send the youths they employ to such schools, in order to preserve them from the temptation to idle away their time with bad associates in the streets, and also to render them better servants by affording them useful instruction. It is indeed fearful to think how many thousands of poor little boys are cast adrift, and all moral and religious training absolutely abandoned at the very age when bad examples are most readily followed, and a low tone of thinking and feeling, and vicious propensities are most easily acquired.

\* These considerations especially apply to manufacturing towns, and to the case of half-pay apprentices.

Now, whatever may by some be thought desirable, or whatever may be expedient in other countries, in this country it is not possible to compel by law all parents to keep their children at school till the age of fourteen, and parents scarcely able to provide for their families, will not easily be induced to sacrifice their children's earnings in order to promote their education.

What then can be done for these poor little victims of the poverty, ignorance or avarice of their relatives? I own I see but one expedient by which we may hope to meet an evil of the most serious magnitude, the most appalling consequences; an evil to which very much of the utter degradation of the lower orders is to be traced, i. e. the general cessation of all religious and moral superintendence at ten or twelve years old.

The plan I would now suggest may be open to many apparent objections, and some difficulty may occur as to the means of carrying it out. But I think that no insurmountable difficulties or objections do in fact exist. And if every school-room, now used only during the day, for the purposes of instruction, and then remaining dark, closed, and useless, were thrown open, warmed, and lighted in the evening, and under proper regulations, for the use of a new set of

learners and teachers, I think a very beneficial change would take place in our youthful male population. For girls I would certainly not advise night schools.

I would then entreat you to employ a small portion of the funds entrusted to you, in making an experiment, which, should it prove successful, may be the means of introducing generally, the supplemental education so much needed at the present time for the lower orders.

Open, I beg of you, the school-rooms belonging to your female institution from six to eight in the evening, for boys between the age of ten and fifteen. Open your boys' school-room from six to nine, for youths between the age of fifteen and twenty, or even between fifteen and twenty-five.

"What?" I hear some say, "entice boys and youths from their homes, their fire-sides, and afford them a pretence for running wild in the streets at night?" Are boys at home and by their fire-sides in towns at those hours? or do they congregate in the streets, and assist each other in plans of mischief and pilfering, and this often for want of something better to do?

Besides, what prevents the registers of absence, by which it may be ascertained whether boys sent by their parents or masters to these schools, stay away under false pretences? I would place these schools

under a regular system of management, &c., and a certain defined plan of instruction should be pursued in them.

The object would not be merely to give a little instruction in writing and arithmetic, as in the existing private night-schools. In these evening schools for boys from ten to fifteen, well selected juvenile libraries should be provided, and half an hour in each evening might be allowed for the voluntary reading of interesting and instructive books. Intelligent masters would read aloud to the school, give oral instruction, make observations, and ask questions, and require written statements on slates, black boards, and painted walls of what had been read or said. Maps and prints in illustration should be shown. Occasionally the children might have the pleasure of seeing a magic lantern. At least two evenings in the week, I would advise that some scriptural instruction should be given to the boys; and probably you would occasionally attend to this portion of the instruction.

Writing, linear drawing and arithmetic would have their turns different evenings in the week; but vocal music, I think, should be the exhilarating pleasure of a portion of every evening; and I would propose, that before parting, a psalm or hymn should always be sung.

I will venture to assert that a night school conducted on this plan would soon become the favourite resort of a multitude of boys, who, without such an object, would be employed in vicious or mischievous pursuits, for want of something else to do.

In the adult school, that is the one for youths between fifteen and twenty, the same general plan ought to be pursued, but it should be carried out further; and, of course, the library attached to it would consist of books adapted to the capacities of older boys. Their instruction ought to be varied, and enlivened by short, clear, scientific lectures; and these would often be given gratis, for many persons, it might be hoped, would offer their services to assist the young, where there would be no formal display. Instruction in linear drawing, and singing from notation in parts, would form a most interesting and important part of the scheme, and open an endless source of rational and improving pleasure.\* Not only books to read, but paper, and blank books for writing, should be supplied; and the youths

\* Any one who has attended the meetings of the Choral Societies, established by the benevolent exertions of William Hickson, Esq., can have no doubt of the beneficial effects of cultivating music as a source of rational and delightful recreation amongst all classes of society.



ought to be allowed to purchase blank books for themselves, and to make extracts in them from the books in the library. Thus the great principle of voluntary self-instruction would be habitually acted upon.

You will now naturally ask, "Who is to superintend these night schools, and where are you to find your masters, your lecturers, &c.?" I repeat, in answer, my former observation, a demand will always create a supply. But certainly do not admit in these school-rooms those masters who have borne the burthen and heat of the day, and who will not come to the task with a sufficient degree of animation to make it interesting to the learners.

I am well aware that you must not attempt yourself to superintend regularly in the evening in those school-rooms which you will so frequently visit in the morning. You must provide, of course, regular *superintendents and directors of your two juvenile and adult night schools*. In your large commercial city many are surely to be found who will be able and willing to undertake the office; probably, one of your curates might afford much assistance. I trust that gradually both these young men may catch your educating spirit, and become your assistants in either day or evening schools, as may be found necessary. But, besides these directors of both schools, I think

that you must appoint a Committee of Management, of which, of course, you will yourself be the President. The powers vested in this Committee will be the examination and selection of candidates for the office of teachers in both the night schools, and that of visiting them at all times. Experience alone can prove from what rank these candidate teachers will present themselves.

I am taught to believe that in all large cities there are many respectable young men, carrying on their own education with a view of preparing themselves for different professions, who would gladly add to their scanty means of support and self-improvement, by giving two evening hours to the education of the rank just below their own. For instance, students of chemistry, medicine, surgery, music, law, architecture, engraving, drawing, &c., often men of respectability, who have no firesides, no homes—who resort to coffee houses, theatres, &c., many for want of some change of employment—such youths, under the control of your director and your committee of management, might surely become most valuable agents; and might not a bond of union between different gradations of rank be thus promoted?

On the supposition that by the three establishments I have now suggested, you can prove that you are

able materially to promote the religious and moral training of the youth of your populous city, why may we not hope that in other cities your example may be followed? And possibly you may be the means (by the successful experiments you make), to induce those who have actually the command of public funds, to adopt, partially or wholly, schemes of which the advantage shall have become apparent.

By these night schools, a good foundation would be laid for those well-meant but now imperfectly useful mechanics' institutes, which, I believe, often fail in consequence of the absolute want of a good ground-work of education in the members. Curiosity at first attracts numbers, and perhaps many are pleased with the novelty and variety of the subjects lectured on: but as nothing can continue to be interesting which is not clearly understood; and as it is seldom that an uneducated adult has leisure or resolution necessary to his acquiring that rudimentary knowledge, without which scientific or historical lectures would not be intelligible, the members of these institutions very frequently dwindle away. Institutions which might become invaluable to those who had received a preparatory education, are often decried or ridiculed as vain attempts to force on the march of intellect, are supposed to be injurious rather

than beneficial, and to encourage a taste for a superficial smattering of a mere semblance of learning, rather than to promote the cause of wisdom and virtue.

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## LETTER V.

My dear Friend,

I now enter on the subject on which I can give you my opinions with more confidence than on any other, because they have been tested by actual experience: and yet the plan I wish to recommend to you is so new—so untried in the country—it militates against so many preconceived habits and opinions, that I almost tremble lest you should not give it your unprejudiced attention. I dread lest you should throw aside my letter before you have half read it. I fear that, even should you read to the end, you may throw it aside, exclaiming, “Impossible! Utopian!” And yet again all my hopes revive, when I recollect that your heart is in the cause, that you consider the large sum confided to you as a most sacred trust, and that even if it involve much personal sacrifice, you will feel yourself amply repaid, if you can fulfil the wishes of the testator, and discover the best means of improving the religious and moral education of the lower orders.

At all events, I am determined that I will for the moment discard all my fears, and that I will not be

deterred from boldly avowing my singular opinions ; and if I can persuade you fairly to make the experiment, and to adopt the scheme I will now suggest, I have no doubt but that your success will quickly make converts to my opinion, and raise up imitators of your example.

I will at once then dash into the middle of my subject. I will ask, Can you, at your age, in your circumstances, give up, at least for a few years, what are usually called the pleasures of the world, what are generally esteemed the pleasures of society ? I do not mean to ask you whether you will deprive yourself of all natural and social intercourse with your friends and neighbours, but whether you can so far leave the beaten track, as to give up the late large dinner, and gay evening, parties, so frequent in your populous city ; whether you can, conscientiously, desert some of the many meetings on public business which your duty would lead you to attend, unless you had this peculiar vocation, but to which I believe that both inclination and a sense of duty will bring a sufficient number for the purposes of public business ; can you, in short, be yourself the director of your training schools, as well as the visitor of your female and boys' school ? And here let me anticipate the remonstrances of your friends, who will, doubtless,

represent to you that the funds committed to you are ample : that you may give £200 a year for a first-rate training master, who will undertake all the religious instruction during school hours, will read prayers twice a day, and accompany the boys to church as often as you think proper ; and, besides this, who will be able to bring them on in algebra, mathematics, navigation, land-surveying ; teach them history, geography, the use of the globes, or even chemistry, geometry, mechanics ; in short, who will undertake all the higher branches of religious and secular education. They will add, also, that you may afford to pay an under-master, who can watch the boys out of school-hours, and do all the drudgery work, which, of course, the well-educated clergyman you would so highly remunerate, could not be, expected to undertake, as he must, out of school-hours, want the rest and relaxation of some society with his friends, and could hardly be expected to shut himself up with little agriculturists. My dear friend, listen to none of these things ; I will answer your advisers only by placing before you my own *beau ideal* of the spot in which I trust your heart will be centered, which will become your favorite, your most happy resort, where you will be surrounded by the objects of your affection, to whom you will become

as a father, a friend, an elder brother. Again, I know that it may be said, Is all this right for a man of your family and connections, who ought to support the dignity of the church? If in each diocese one clergyman could be found, who would risk the dignity of the clerical character in the way I would propose, I am persuaded that in ten years' time the result of his devotion would so promote the cause of religious and moral education, that he would be found to have been the truest friend to the interests of humanity, and to the Christian church. I am convinced, that such devotedness of time and thought would be at once the most acceptable and the most useful imitation of the example and doctrines of that Lord and Master, who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister; and who exhorted his disciples to feed his sheep, and to feed his lambs. But, surely, your kind friends may say, If you give a thorough examination in the catechism, and some Scripture-reading once or twice a week, you have done all that is required of a clergyman, your business is to give *sound religious education*, and to place in your school a master capable of carrying on all the secular instruction.

Alas, alas! that the terms 'religious instruction'—  
'religious education'—should be so ill understood!



that it should be thought possible thus to divide the office of religious and secular instructor ; that knowledge of all kinds—true knowledge wisely given—should thus be diverted from its legitimate object, and made, by the way in which it is communicated, any thing rather than the handmaid to religion ; that reason and revelation, the highest gifts of God, should thus be portioned out to be administered in prescribed doses, at specified hours, by different persons ! O, that which God has joined together, let not man thus put asunder !

But I leave my objectors to settle their questions for themselves, and proceed to give you (as far as the limits of my letter will allow) an outline of my scheme, or at least, a general idea of the duties I so earnestly desire you to take upon yourself.

In the first place, on the outskirts of your city, and within a short walk of your female establishment and your boys' day school, I trust that you will be able to hire or purchase a few acres of land. Your present house and garden are already pleasantly situated, and I think that some ground not yet built upon adjoins your premises. Your own garden is a large one ; add but three acres to that, and at once you have all the land which you will need, land which will soon be made productive by the sole care and labour of your

future agricultural family party. At the further end of your garden, bordering on the field which you must add to your domain, if it does not already belong to you (of which I am not certain), you must erect two plain neat buildings; one must consist of two adjoining rooms on the ground-floor, of a size calculated to answer the purpose of school-room and workshop, for twenty boys; the other must be the house in which they must eat and sleep, and must consist, on the ground-floor, of a kitchen, pantry, and a room about twenty feet square, for the boys' eating room and evening studies. Above these must be two rooms, sufficiently lofty and well ventilated, calculated for dormitories, with ten small beds in each. These dormitories will occupy the upper story, except the space reserved for a bed-room for the matron of this simple boarding-house.

One of the most important objects will be, to procure exactly the right person suited to be at once the matron of your boarding-house, and the sole female employed in the institution. She will not only prepare the food for the boys, but she will eat with them, nurse them if they are ill, and be responsible for the observation of the rules which you will lay down for the conduct of the boarding-house.

You may wonder that in an establishment into which

I contemplate eventually the admission of twenty boys, I should suppose that one matron would be able to do the necessary household work. I descend to particulars. I suppose that the care of washing and mending, and making the house-linen should not be given to her. All this is easily provided for by employing a laundress. The dormitories, the school-room and dining-room I suppose to be cleaned and put in order by the boys themselves, with the most scrupulous attention to order and cleanliness. And I could wish that every accommodation should be provided for extreme cleanliness in person, and the orderly arrangement of their clothes, hats, shoes, &c., as the slightest degree of slovenliness in person or dress ought to be studiously avoided.\*

The only charge which would remain for the matron, would be the stewing and baking of the frugal cottage fare, which alone should be given; and in this it will not be amiss that your boarders should alternately give the needful assistance in the kitchen. Your future schoolmasters had better learn all they can of the common every-day business of life, and be ready to become village or agricultural schoolmasters,

\* Any one who has had the privilege of seeing Parkhurst prison in the Isle of Wight, will be aware of the great importance, in a moral point of view, of the strictest attention to these minute details.

or to take charge of schools in New Zealand or in the West Indies.

It will be most important to bring up your boys in the strictest habits of frugality and temperance. Let the diet be wholesome, plentiful, and well prepared ; but bear always in mind that you are training future schoolmasters, who must probably be satisfied with very moderate salaries, and that whatever be their future income, you will confer the greatest benefit upon them by accustoming them to the simplest diet. If you give them tea, sugar, or butter, let these be reserved for the cheerful, social Sunday evening supper—the concluding meal of their happiest day. Let them drink water only with their dinner : bread and milk, sago, oatmeal, rice, &c. will vary their other meals. Let not only their diet, but their dress, be of the very simplest materials. Blue frocks for the school, working smock-frocks for the garden, light in summer, thick in winter, over stout waistcoats and trousers, will be their best uniform in the week ; and great exactness as to the arrangement of their clothes on the shelves or drawers provided for the purpose should be required. Their Sunday dress should be of blue cloth ; they should bear the appearance of well dressed boys of the middling ranks, and they must be taught to take the greatest care to preserve these best clothes neat and whole.

These details may appear trifling ; but, believe me, they are most important. Much of your moral training will depend on the most exact attention to every minute detail, and nothing is trifling which can promote the order, neatness, exactness, and cleanliness of these lads. Remember the good old proverb, "Cleanliness is next to godliness," and let every part of your establishment prove that very studied attention is paid to these points. Give to your boys an early habit of responsibility, by placing some one thing especially under the charge of each boy during alternate weeks or months. For instance, let one boy be responsible for the arrangement of the garden tools ; another for the care of the slates and slate pencils ; a third for the shoes and hats ; a fourth for the regularity with which the school and garden smock-frocks are hung on the right pegs ; another must have the charge of the copy books and pens ; one must be the librarian, and keep all the books in their places. Thus will all learn a habit of exactness : and a mutual desire of assisting one another, by not occasioning disorder in any department, will thus be introduced.

In all these arrangements, keep in view sedulously the cultivation of a spirit of kindness, and a desire not to get a school-fellow into a scrape, or to expose any little sin of omission. Let each consider the

faults of others as misfortunes which all desire to prevent and avert. Accustom your boys to habits of great gentleness and civility towards each other. A boy ought never to snatch a book or a spade from another boy, but ask courteously for what he wants, and return thanks civilly for what he receives. Towards yourself exact the most respectful outward demeanour : the hat must always be touched at whatever hour they chance to meet you, be it the first or the fiftieth time in the day. "Good morning, Sir," "Good night, Sir," must not be forgotten. The matron must enforce great propriety of manners during the meals,—and all the little courtesies of life must become easy and habitual. These respectful habits towards yourself will never interfere with the most affectionate and confiding intercourse. These are little things ; but in a school it is pre-eminently true, that "he that despiseth little things shall fall by little and little." And little as some of them may appear, I believe them to be of more importance than decimals, vulgar fractions, double entries, algebra, and all the various technical instruction attempted in some schools, which, though they should not be neglected, are, as you must know, of very small value as mere acquirements. Such information is worth no more than as it affects the character. It does

indeed furnish a good and tractable mind with valuable assistance in augmenting its powers, but from this very quality it ought rather to be withheld from a stubborn and haughty temper than afforded to it.

The truth is this, and it is a truth which I think is too often overlooked. The first object in all schools for training future masters ought to be to adopt that course of mental and moral discipline best calculated to lay the foundation of a high moral character, and a sound practical judgment, to inspire the youths therein educated, with pure and simple, yet refined tastes and feelings; to cultivate in them the most self-denying devotedness to the cause of humanity, and a determination derived from the highest motives to acquire all the knowledge which will enable them to train a future generation in the ways of wisdom and virtue.

These are the ends to keep in view. To effect such results is of infinitely higher importance than to instil into these candidate teachers any given amount of historical, geographical, or mathematical knowledge, to render them skilful in music or drawing; or to impart to them mere practical dexterity in teaching.

This latter point is of no importance, good teaching is not a matter of mechanical dexterity, but it is the

result of great benevolence and love of children. It requires a reflecting mind, a quick perception of character, and that clearness of apprehension which gives the power of analysing a subject into its elements, and thus simplifying and bringing it down to the apprehension of children.

Experience will gradually enable you to adapt the course of studies pursued in your training schools to these ends, and the little I could suggest on the subject would be comparatively useless. What I have said respecting the mode of instruction to be pursued in the boys' school and night schools will apply, of course, to this school; but, in the place in which you are situated, you will have one great advantage, which in the heart of a town you cannot command. The intellectual powers of your boys, as well as their physical strength, will be refreshed and invigorated by a constant alternation of agreeable, interesting, manual, and intellectual labour.

I believe that not less than six hours in the day ought to be spent in the garden, or on your farm. With the exception of mowing, I know no work which boys of twelve or fourteen cannot perform; possibly (as it is not desirable to take boys above thirteen at first) you may need some help from a labourer, for mowing your parterre, but as soon as possible



dispense with all assistance. Let your boys know the delight of thinking that they supply your table with fruit, by their labour and skill, and fill your garden with flowers. Allow them some little plots of their own, and encourage them to contrive for themselves a little green-house, rustic seats, &c. Boys will soon learn to make their own cucumber and melon frames. You may gradually collect some little museum, and herbals of dried plants, if any of them wish to study botany. A microscope will be a great delight. But beware of too frequently giving these indulgences : let them work out their own pleasures, and make their own contrivances : not only encourage self-instruction, but self-amusement, and only now and then give a stimulus by such indulgences. Do not make every thing easy to them ; let your boys experience the pleasure which attends successful efforts to overcome difficulties. The care of green-house plants, clearing away dead leaves, and all the little niceties required in their cultivation, will have a moral effect on the character. Perhaps few can imagine the intense delight with which the first nosegay of lilies or roses will be brought to you—with which the cuttings, watched day after day, are observed to have taken root—the first leaves on the melon or cucumber hot-bed are seen to spring up. Then, pruning and grafting are most

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interesting occupations. O, who would deprive youth of these pure and innocent delights, and leave them to kick and scuffle with one another, and gamble with chuck-farthing or marbles !

I hope you will occasionally indulge your boys with a game at cricket, and that you will often encourage them to run races in cold weather, or allow them to sing, in parts, under your trees on a fine summer evening, or take their own books out of doors to read for their amusement.

If you wish to educate religiously and morally, you must soothe and exhilarate the feelings, and allow a free play of head and heart. I have seen boys deeply interested by a small aviary of their own construction, for a collection of birds. Supply them with carpenters' tools, and with very little direction they will make their benches, or even the little tables or writing boxes they may want ; but entrust these tools only to your elder boys, to whom, of course, some instruction must be given at first respecting the manner of using them.

There will be a plot of ground for supplying their boarding-house with vegetables : of course it will become an object of interest to raise good potatoes and cabbages. Let them have Mawe's Gardening Book, or some such books, and give them only general

directions, and leave them to work out their experience. Let them tell you what they are doing—why they are so doing—and you will soon find that they will forecast a good succession of crops, as well as any gardener.

In this, as in all your other establishments, your difficulties and discouragements will occur at the outset. You must have some up-hill work, because you must begin with elder boys, whom you have not trained yourself; the greatest circumspection must be exercised in the choice of the boys you admit at first; do not take any boys from the lowest ranks into your training school—early vulgar slovenly habits are seldom eradicated. You will soon receive applications from parents in respectable situations, and who will readily pay a small sum for the board of their sons—a proviso you should always require. Remember, that it is not your object in this establishment, to endeavour to reform vicious or unruly characters and untoward tempers; you are to perfect, and mature, and prepare, as teachers and trainers of the future generation, those whom you are able to find most gifted with the disposition you require; and perhaps you must be content to dismiss some you admit at first. Spare no pains to procure, at first, a boy about fourteen, who will be fit to become the leader of the others,—your trusty

deputy, one on whom the other boys are, in your absence, to depend ; whom you may trust, and who will inform you of the least infringement of your regulations. Do not tell me that such boys are not to be met with ; I can speak positively, for I speak from experience, when I assure you that it is no such very difficult matter to mould to your purpose an intelligent, well-disposed boy. Good sense, a good disposition, a moderate degree of attainments, but above all, an humble, honest, and affectionate heart, these are the indispensable requisites. The pleasure of being trusted, and of feeling trustworthy, goes far towards forming the moral character, trust your boys, then, as far as possible, always being vigilantly on your guard against any possible deception, but do not presuppose deception. Of course it must happen, that you will be obliged frequently, to be many hours absent from your seminary, and believe me that you may absent yourself, after the first few months, without fear. Your boys will become manly independent characters ; and, relieved from the weight of the constant injudicious interference of a commonplace master, they will carry on a self-educating process in a manner more satisfactory than you can imagine, till experience has confirmed my anticipations.

In order to prevent a total failure on your first

outset, I charge you not to admit more than four or five boys on first opening your training school; employ them the first week or two chiefly in garden work; you will only have to assign them their tasks under the leader, and leave them very much to themselves to perform them; they must begin by cultivating a small portion only of the land, which will eventually be assigned to them.

At the commencement, they must only be in the school-room at such hours as you can yourself attend to them. You will soon discover their capabilities, and you will then be able to assign them their school-business, which they will afterwards prepare in your absence as well as in your presence; the leader always being responsible for the silence and order of the little party, and bound to chalk on the wall a record of any transgression of rules, however slight.

I speak from experience, when I assure you that a boy who faithfully performs this duty, may preserve the affection while he secures the respect of his school-fellows.

Instead of the false code of honour which, provided that boys protect one another, justifies them in deceiving and duping their master, a truly honourable spirit is engendered, and the high principle is admitted, that it is honourable to assist the kind

endeavours of the master to render his pupils virtuous, in order that they may be happy. How different from the odious combat which is generally kept up : one party watching to do wrong with impunity — the other vainly watching to detect wrong.

In about a month's time you may safely admit two or three more to join your party ; but I would advise you, if possible, to let them drop in one at a time. One new comer cannot help falling immediately into the habits and tone of feeling which he finds established. The new atmosphere in which he breathes effects a sort of instantaneous revulsion in his mind. Gradually, in the course of six months, you may increase your number to perhaps twelve : experience must direct you. If you are fortunate enough to select good elder boys, you may proceed without fear to admit one by one your twenty boys.

I advise you to select your boys between the age of seven and fourteen : two or three of seven ; the same number of eight, nine, ten, &c. ; so as to keep up a regular gradation of ages. By always keeping up a supply of younger boys, you will be able to instil into your elder ones the true principles of education. They will become to the little boys what you are to them—their teachers, protectors, friends. Let a spirit of openness and confidence pervade your whole party,

from the youngest to the eldest. Take care that there is no folding up of the little souls within themselves: let each cherish and help forward the other, and watch peculiarly against a close or selfish spirit. Truth and candour lie at the bottom of all that is good.

Some may fear ill effects from leaving your dormitories to the charge of your elder boys; I fear none. Your matron is near at hand, and would hear any noise or confusion, but none will arise. Out-door labour secures sleep immediately on lying down, and the necessity of early rising leaves little time or opportunity for mischief; besides, I always suppose your elder boys trustworthy and responsible.

You ought never to keep any boy beyond fourteen who does not shew the necessary qualifications for becoming a teacher. At that age they must consider themselves regular candidates for future situations; and, as candidates, they must go through a probation of two or three years in your establishment; at the expiration of which time, it must be your object to transplant them to some other educational institution, where they may act as teachers in a subordinate situation; but yet where they may gradually begin to have a greater degree of liberty than you can venture to allow in your establishment, and where they may

gain more knowledge of the world before they are launched as independent school-masters.

It must be the object of your institution to preserve your boys from all external sources of contamination—while you are labouring to instil into them the highest principles of action, to cultivate the best habits and dispositions, and to create pure, high, and virtuous tastes and feelings. But before they leave you, you must gradually endeavour to put them on their guard against the temptations and seductions they must hereafter encounter; teach them not to depend on their own strength, whatever degree of self-government they may think they have acquired; teach them to expect temptations from within and from without, and to watch and pray, and to put on the whole armour of God. Never let them leave your asylum of virtue and innocence till you have endeavoured to awaken in them an expectation of the struggles they must undergo in their passage through life; and when they leave you, keep up an affectionate correspondence with them, and exhort them to consider their lives devoted to the high and noble office of leading the young in the way they should go. I would fain hope that from yours, and from similar institutions, our young clergy may hereafter select most valuable assistants for the education of their parishioners.



The parsonage garden, the glebe, the school-room, the carpenters' shop, perhaps, would all afford varied delightful occupations to boys of all ages, under the mild superintendence of a youth trained in the manner I have recommended: a very young man might well be trusted with this charge, under a clergyman's daily superintendence. Training agricultural schools surely will, ere long, spring up in all directions; and the little urchins from the village mistresses' preparatory school will join the elder boys during a part of the day. Diocesan agricultural training schools will surely, ere long, be formed; and in these, such youths as you will educate will be required as assistants to masters or clergymen; and I cannot help believing that you will in a few years have the satisfaction of annually sending off two or three of your pupils to act most usefully in these capacities.

I wish I knew of any elementary books to recommend to you on the subject of agriculture and carpenter's work, or on any of the common handicrafts of life, which would be so simple and clear as to interest and instruct your boys; what is wanted are the most simply written and explanatory little horn books on these several trades and occupations. The difficulty is to find writers who understand the meaning of the words simple and elementary

who can imagine a boy of 12 or 14 standing before them, and who can bring down their ideas and their language to the level of his capacity. I think that you could not more beneficially apply a small portion of the large funds of which you have the disposal, than in offering premiums to those who could succeed in thus simplifying the first elements of instruction on these points. It is perhaps difficult to give you an idea of the exceedingly simple, the purely elementary nature of the works which, it seems to me, are wanted, and which, I believe, are no where to be found.

Perhaps I cannot do this better than by concluding my present letter with an extract from one I have lately received from a friend who is anxiously enquiring for such elementary books, and who desiring to give me some idea of the nature of the elementary works for which he is in vain seeking, for the use of agricultural training schools, has selected two subjects on which to enlarge, in order to explain his views—those of carpentering and agriculture. The same views of course would apply to horticulture, masons' or painters' work, and to all the processes carried on by artizans, mechanics, or even by household servants. The following is an extract from my friend's letter :—

“ I will give an example of what I mean by sug-

gesting a few hints on the subjects of carpentering and agriculture. Possibly the best book now published for the information of young carpenters, is "Nicholson's New Carpenter's Guide," containing a complete book of lines, for carpenters, joiners, and workmen in general, explained in theory and practice by numerous engravings, wherein the utility of every line is fully exemplified. Now this is a book full of the best information for *educated* carpenters, &c., of some experience, but quite unintelligible to all beginners, but was published and entitled as *purely elementary*. What we want in reference to carpentering is, 1st, the name and use of every tool used in that trade—its form exemplified in a small wood cut—the best method of repairing and sharpening it—its ordinary cost, its probable period of duration for effecting work—the different trades in which it may be used, and clear directions how to use it—the nature and quality of the several materials required to make it, such as wood, steel, iron, &c.

"2nd. The description of all the different kinds of wood used by carpenters, their respective qualities, and the reasons given why one sort of wood is preferable to another sort for particular purposes. The countries named from which each can be most cheaply and best obtained, the periods of the year at which each

sort should be felled for use, and how best preserved, &c.

“3rd. The name of the several joints used in timber work, such as scarfing, dovetailing, &c. &c., in fact a technical vocabulary with illustrations by wood-cuts in reference to this portion of carpenters’ and joiners’ work.

“4th. How most securely to put together squares, triangles, arches, and all polygons in wood, with instructions how to make the several grains of the different woods work *most favourably* for such purposes.

“5th. The very simplest series of polygons, showing in familiar language, *but not in scientific terms*, the divisibility of each into other regular figures, the simplest methods of calculating their superficial and solid contents, &c.

“6th. The nature and methods of preparing different glues, cements, paints, &c., as applicable to different sorts of wood and work.

“7th. The actual and specific gravities of different sorts of wood, and thence showing why one sort of timber is preferable to another for roofings, boats, &c.

“8th. The most approved methods of preserving wood from the injuries arising from exposure to air, water, underground, &c.

“In fine, we want that simple elementary instruction

which would enable a youth on being bound apprentice to a carpenter, to commence his practical labours with interest and profit. All the information above stated is now in the possession of every master tradesman carpenter—but how obtained? after years of labour, and at the expense of cutting up and destroying, for lack of knowledge, our property. After having gone through such an elementary course of instruction, the young carpenter might be enabled to comprehend Mr. Nicholson's present elementary work on the subject.

“As regards agriculture, boys from ten to fifteen years of age might derive much useful information at schools, to which small portions of land are attached for labour, provided an appropriate course of elementary instruction on that subject was compiled, and, as far as possible, exemplified in practice.

“Such a course might embrace the following heads, as well as many others which would suggest themselves on further consideration :—

“1st. The most approved methods of keeping farm accounts, including outgoings for labour, repairs, seeds, machinery, and other requisite disbursements; receipts for produce sold, value of stock in hand, &c., showing, quarterly, the net profit or loss. The filling up these forms would furnish invaluable lessons in writing, calculation, &c.

“2nd. A catalogue and description of the several soils known in the United Kingdom, specifying those most adapted to tillage, pasture, &c., with the peculiar properties of each. Such a catalogue would form an index of reference for illustrating the subsequent details of instruction.

“3rd. A simple chemical analysis of manures, showing why one description of manure is preferable to another for different plants and soils; for instance, lime possesses the property of correcting the acids in clay, which are injurious to vegetation; salt does harm to wet land, but is highly beneficial to dry soils, &c. On this subject see Sir H. Davy’s book on the Chemical Analysis of Manures.

“4th. The times and seasons most favourable for breaking up land for tillage, preparing fallows, the best means of effecting these operations, and the beneficial results sought by the several processes. See Loudon’s Farming Encyclopædia.

“5th. A catalogue of all tools used in agriculture, their respective uses, average cost, and peculiar adaptation to different soils, shewing why the tool which answers a purpose in one soil will not necessarily answer as well in every other kind of land.

“6th. Shew the injury done to land by too much water, and the advantages to be derived from drain-

ing, as exemplified by the fact that the presence of an undue proportion of water in or on the land generates aquatic grasses and weeds, unfavourable for pasture, and destructive to grain.

“7th. Describe the most economical and approved methods of effecting such drainage.

“8th. The times and seasons for collecting harvests, specifying the treatment required for preserving different kinds of grain, roots, hay, &c.; as also the periods and most approved methods of sowing and planting the same.

“9th. A simple and familiar illustration of the true meaning of the term Capital, as applied to agriculture, including as it does, not only the article of money, but knowledge of all kinds, and in particular, shewing that the labouring man, whether possessed of actual money or not in the shape of coin, is really in possession of the most productive kind of capital, when blessed with intelligence, health, and strength, commodities which are always convertible to money by agricultural pursuits at their market or in competitive value, and only require proper application. On this portion of the subject, suitable extracts might be made from Mr. Charles Knight’s “Working Man’s Companion, or Results of Machinery,” shewing that every improvement in art lessens the cost of produc-

tion, and benefits the consumer without injury to the producer, inasmuch as cheap production gives increased employment to the latter party, and as the productions of industry multiply, the means of acquiring those productions multiply also.

“ These heads may be extended as required.

“ It may be objected, that the highest order of talent must be obtained for the production of such an elementary course of instruction on agricultural subjects as now suggested,—not so ; patient industry and the exercise of good judgment would alone soon amass and simplify all the materials requisite for such a work.

“ These materials already exist in print, and in full abundance ; but, unfortunately, they are so scattered through the various works on agriculture, and so intermixed with other valuable matter beyond the age for which we are seeking elementary and simple illustrations, as to be useless in their present form for schools.

“ If agriculture and the various trades of common life are to provide the means of sustenance to millions of our fellow-creatures, will it not be wise, before their energies are practically called into action, to give them elementary instruction, so far as it can be done, in these several occupations.



“ A youth is now commonly apprenticed at the age of fourteen to some trade, totally ignorant of all the elements of his future occupation, and without the slightest interest in the craft which is to form the future staple of his life ; and we wonder at his indifference to it and love of change.

“ Ought these matters so to be ? If not, a remedy may possibly be found by earlier educating the mind, and exercising the hand in the several vocations of common industry, and under such a training, in place of an excitable and restless population, we might hope for a rising generation of contented and happy, because really educated, labourers and mechanics.”

I conclude my letter with this extract, which appears to me to contain most valuable suggestions.

## LETTER VI.

My dear Friend,

I WILL conclude my correspondence with you for the present, by stating my opinion on the two points which you have desired me to consider, 1st. Whether your schools should be put in union with the Government or Diocesan Schools? 2nd. Whether I would recommend annual public examinations of your institutions?

With respect to the first query, as you do not apply for any grant from the Government or National Society, I see no reason for placing your schools in union with either; except indeed it were with a view of obtaining the benefits of inspection. But I am inclined to hope that when either the Government or the Diocesan inspectors visit your city, they will not refuse to give you the benefit of their advice and inspection. By uniting with one party, you might possibly deprive yourself of the advantage of the inspection of the other. Now the inspection of both is most desirable for you—an advantage which I earnestly wish all schools could enjoy. Both parties

have one common object at heart—the happiness and improvement of mankind ; and if it is likely that some slight shades of difference may exist in the means by which they pursue this object, may not good arise from these very differences ? For my part, I always look upon differences and collision of human opinion as one of the merciful dispensations of Providence, as the appointed means by which truth is gradually elicited.

Open your doors, then, to all the School inspectors who will visit and advise you. You may learn much from them, probably they may learn something from you ; for, however wisely Government or Diocesan committees may select inspectors, they will probably have much to learn from experience respecting the nature of the youthful mind, and the best means of training it to virtue and knowledge. I entreat you, then, to invite all inspectors—publish your own faithful reports, and let your conclusions be tested or contradicted by the report of others.

With respect to the second query, Whether I advise any annual public examinations of your schools?—

I answer, most unhesitatingly, certainly not. Public examinations are the bane of all schools, and strike at the root of Christian feeling and Christian principle. I speak strongly ; but I have long felt most

deeply, most strongly on this point. Of all the wise sayings of Solomon, none is more wise than this:—"Before honor is humility." The texts of Scripture I would most often bring home to the hearts and consciences of children are such as these:—"Look not every one to your own things, but every one to the things of others." "Seek not the honor that cometh from men, but the honor that cometh from God only" "Let nothing be done through strife and vain glory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves." Now I believe that public examinations would directly militate against all these principles—against all the feelings which it must be the first object of yourself, and of every educator of our people, to instil.

I not only object to all annual public examinations, but I am against opening school-rooms, on any specified days or hours, in order to gratify the public curiosity: such hours or days have always, more or less, a bad effect on children: they soon discover that these exhibitions are not intended for their benefit, but to raise the reputation of the master, or to obtain funds, or for some other indirect purpose in which they feel no interest.

Do nothing which can lead your children to think that it is your object to show to others how much they

know. If they once perceive this desire, it will poison knowledge of all kinds at its very source—will lead them to make a false estimate of the little sum of acquirements which they may chance to have obtained. Of course they will think this great, if they perceive that you desire that it should be publicly produced; and what is still worse, it will create indelible false associations respecting the true end and object of knowledge. Children will scarcely be persuaded to feel that the little they can learn is but dust in the balance, unless it makes them wise unto salvation; while every vain and selfish feeling is generated in their minds by the manner in which they are taught to display what they have acquired.

They will soon become presumptuous and self-conceited; whereas we might hope that they would become daily more and more humble, if they were led on to discover how much there is of useful knowledge which the Almighty has enabled man to acquire, how little they themselves have acquired, and how strenuously and humbly they must use the talents given them if they hope to acquire more.

But do not mistake me: I by no means wish you to close your door against those who really desire to examine into your plans of instruction. By so doing, you would deprive yourself of the benefit of public ob-

servation, and deprive others of the fruits of your experience. For some time, of course, you must work with closed doors; you and your agents must work out your own plans, and gain your own experience before you can give or receive information. The end you have in view, the means by which you are pursuing these ends, cannot be understood till your experience has worked them out and adapted them to the materials you have to work upon.

But when your schools have been established a reasonable time, I advise you to receive applications from all who desire to be admitted to visit them, and to allow of two or three visitors every day dropping in and silently walking round your rooms, and observing at their leisure all that is going on. When those who are interested in education visit your schools, of course you will request them never to betray the least admiration or surprise at any intellectual improvement they may observe. "That is right"—is the utmost which should be said; and then some fact or observation should be added beyond the child's own stock of knowledge, to prove to him that he had only learned a small part of what he might hope hereafter to learn. Encourage your intelligent friends to visit and examine your schools in this spirit, and always request them to let their examina-

tion tend to shew the ignorance rather than the knowledge of the children.

Let the impression left on their mind be such as this :—"A kind gentleman visited us this morning, and gave us this or that instruction, which we were ignorant of." Thus humility and gratitude will be the feelings excited by every examination ; and therefore every examiner will leave your school better than he found it. An intelligent inspector will always form his judgment respecting the state of a school far more from the tone of mind he finds in the children, their desire and aptitude to receive new information, rather than from ascertaining the exact amount of that which they may have already taken in.

It is a great advantage to children to hear subjects handled by different minds ; some new ideas will be gained when the same beaten track is not adhered to. But in all the examinations I have hitherto attended, I have observed a most fidgetty dread and jealousy on the part of the superintendent, lest the master should be interfered with, and lest some new idea should be obtruded on the children's minds, which might interrupt the course in which he intended them to proceed, and to display the stock of information with which they had been primed.

But be very cautious to whom you delegate the

charge of descanting or examining on religious subjects. Let none dare to intrude into the sanctuary whose power of touching the heart and elevating the feelings you have not ascertained.

I beseech you suffer no public religious examinations. I scruple not to assert confidently and decidedly, they are anti-religious examinations. They inevitably separate the facts of our holy religion from the emotions and feelings, for exciting which alone those facts have been imparted to us ; and so separate them that they will scarcely be again united.

I will now, my dear friend, close my present correspondence, and if the advice I have offered you facilitates your bounden duty of promoting the religious and moral education of the lower orders, you will, by requesting that advice, have conferred on me the deepest obligation.

THE END.





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